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GERMAN MANPOWER IN THE SUMMER OF 1943: THE ARMED FORCES AND THE CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE

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I. CONCLUSION

The salient feature of the German position in the summer of 1943 is the exhaustion of the German reserves of combat manpower. On the other hand, the Germans have been successful in finding new supplies of labor, and the civilian labor force has been maintained at a high level.

II. ARGUMENT

A. Military Manpower Position

German losses in the present war up to July 1, 1943, were already considerably higher than total German losses in the World War. These losses are compared in Table 1.

On the other hand, Germany entered the present war with a pool of military manpower considerably larger than the 1913 pool. In 1913 out of a total population of 68 millions, Germany had 9.9 million men aged 18 to 35 inclusive; in 1939 out of 80 million population there were 11.5 million aged 18 to 35 inclusive. The prospective new classes, men 14 to 17 inclusive, numbered 2.7 million in 1913 and the same in 1939. Men 36 to 48 inclusive numbered 5.2 million in 1913 compared with 6.8 million in 1939; but as men of these ages are in general poorly suited to combat duty, the main advantage to Germany in the 1939 position was the gain of 1.6 million men in the best combat ages.

German losses in the present war up to July 1, 1943 have been greater by about 650,000 men than all World War losses, but German reserves in 1939 were greater by 1.6 million than 1913 reserves of men. The Germans have at present about 950,000 more men of combat ages than they had at the time of the Armistice in 1918. The present position of the German armies in respect to reserves and replacements is closely parallel

Table 1. Permanent Losses in the German Armed Forces

(In thousands of men)

	August 2, 1914-November 11, 1918 (1)	September 1, 1939-June 30, 1943 (2)
ARMY		
Permanent battle losses		
a) Killed	1,598	1,880
b) Missing dead	-	677
c) Prisoners of war	840	292
d) Unfit for further service	380	620
e) Total	2,818	3,469
Permanent non-battle losses		
a) Deaths	152	91
b) Unfit for further service	381	228
c) Total	533	319
AIRFORCE[1/] AND NAVY		
Permanent battle and non-battle losses	39	255
TOTAL PERMANENT LOSSES (battle and non-battle)	3,390	4,043

1/ Losses in the Airforce in the last war are included under the Army.

to the position in March 1918.

It is of special interest therefore to follow the trend in the strength of the German army in the months after March 1918. From March 15 to July 15, 1918 the actual strength of the German field army fell by an average of 220,000 men per month, from 5,110,000 to 4,227,000, representing an average monthly decline of 4.3 percent of strength. By mid-July 1918, the actual strength of the Field Army was fully 20 percent under prescribed strength, in spite of the attempts made by the High Command to keep units up to strength through the disbandment of a number of divisions and distribution of the personnel to remaining divisions. The best divisions, which were bearing the full weight of the Ludendorff offensive, were of course much worse off by mid-July; many of the units were at half strength or less.

The results of this situation appeared in the form of long-continued overexertion of the German troops, exhaustion, and discouragement. When the Allied counteroffensive began on August 8, 1918, it achieved decisive results because (1) the German units were undermanned and did not function at their former level of effectiveness, (2) the German front was too thinly held to resist the Allied attacks with tanks

and numerically superior forces, (3) the German troops were exhausted and discouraged and did not fight with the same spirit as they had hitherto displayed.

The strength of the present army (not counting the ground forces of the Luftwaffe) is believed to have been 6.8 million on June 1, 1942. By March 1, 1943, it is estimated that army strength had fallen to 6.2 million. During the spring of 1943, it is believed that the Germans made efforts to replace their winter losses, and they probably succeeded in bringing actual strength back to the level of 6.8 million by June 1, 1943. Of the 6.8 million strength on June 1, 1943, about 2 million were in replacement units, line of communications units, frontier guards, and other units more or less corresponding with the 1918 Occupation Army. The forces of the present German army corresponding to the 1918 Field Army numbered about 4.8 million on June of this year; to this should be added about 300,000 men in the field divisions of the Luftwaffe who are available for ground combat duty. The available combat forces on June 1, 1943 therefore numbered about 5.1 million, about the same combat strength as the German Field Army on March 15, 1918.

Since June 1, 1943, German permanent battle losses have been running at a rate estimated at 175,000 men per month.[1/] In addition it is estimated that deaths, discharges, and assignments to rear units on account of disease and aging have been running at a rate of 25,000 per month.

The main source of replacements for 1943 is the class of 1926, now 17 years old, who numbered 627,000 in all at the beginning of the year. This class is not all available for replacement for army combat units, however. A considerable number of boys from this class has volunteered for Officers' Training and for the Luftwaffe, and others will be assigned to the Navy. At least 50,000 will have been taken for these. The remainder would supply about 46,000 men per month on the average during 1943.

An additional 4,000 men per month could be found by combing out rear units and cancelling deferments. The net decline in first-line combat strength of the German army is therefore estimated at 150,000 per month.

On August 1, 1943, first-line combat strength was 4.8 million on this estimate, and by October 1, 1943, first-line strength will have declined to 4.5 million.

In order to inflict total losses on the Germans comparable to those suffered in the spring of 1918, it

1/ For the basis of this estimate, see Appendix A.

would apparently be necessary for the Allies to undertake operations against the Germans on a large scale. Assuming that the Soviet forces maintain the present level of operations, the Allies would need to inflict about 70,000 losses per month on the German forces in order to push the rate of loss up to the 1918 level.

Net losses of 220,000 men per month would represent a decline of about 5 percent per month in German combat strength. Such a decline over a period of 3 or 4 months would probably lead to the disintegration and collapse of the German army.

B. The Civilian Labor Force

In sharp contrast with the German military manpower position, the supply position for the civilian labor force has been considerably improved during the past year, and further improvement is in prospect. This important new development is due in the main to the success of the German program for the compulsory recruitment of foreign labor. This program has been more successful than was anticipated, and therefore estimates of German prospects for 1943 based on a continued decline in the overall labor force should be revised. In particular, it should be noted that Germany is now in a relatively strong position to resist

attacks aimed at crippling her overall economic potential.

The principal changes in the civilian labor force since May 1939, and in particular over the past year, are shown in the following table, Table 2.

1. Foreign Workers. During the year June 1942 - June 1943, the Germans changed over their program for the recruitment of foreign labor from a mainly voluntary to a compulsory basis. By the Vichy law of September 14, 1942 French men aged 18 to 50 were made liable for compulsory labor service without restriction of location. Under this law, several hundred thousand French men have been called up, examined, and enrolled for service in Germany or with the Todt organization outside of Germany. Similar measures of compulsion have been used by the German authorities in Belgium and Holland. During the early months of 1943 by a separate decree for each area, labor service was made compulsory throughout the German-occupied areas. Offices to enforce the decree were set up throughout occupied Soviet territories, and large numbers of Soviet citizens have been forcibly deported for work in Germany.

The effective operation of the compulsory recruitment program is apparent in the following table, Table 3.

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Table 2. The German Civilian Labor Force

May 1939 - July 1943

(Thousands)

	May 1939 - July 1942			July 1942 - July 1943			May 1939 - July 1943		
	Total (1)	Male (2)	Female (3)	Total (4)	Male (5)	Female (6)	Total (7)	Male (8)	Female (9)
A Gainfully active at beginning of period	39,365	24,440	14,925	34,660	18,530	16,130	39,365	24,440	14,925
GAINS									
B Natural growth	340	235	105	120	95	25	460	330	130
C Internal recruits	940	290	650	120	-	120	1,060	290	770
D Disabled veterans	215	215	-	345	345	-	560	560	-
E Net foreign recruits	2,000	1,550	450	2,500	1,875	625	4,500	3,425	1,075
F Prisoners of war	1,500	1,500	-	-50 a/	-50 a/	-	1,450	1,450	-
G Total Gains	4,995	3,790	1,205	3,035	2,265	770	8,030	6,055	1,975
LOSSES TO ARMED FORCES									
H Net increase in armed forces	7,450	7,450	-	-95	-95	-	7,355	7,355	-
I Permanent losses	2,250	2,250	-	1,790	1,790	-	4,040	4,040	-
J Total losses	9,700	9,700	-	1,695	1,695	-	11,395	11,395	-
K Gainfully active at end of period	34,660	18,530	16,130	36,000	19,100	16,900	36,000	19,100	16,900

a/ This position appears as a loss due to the decrease in working prisoners of war.

Table 3. Foreign Workers in Germany

	Country of Origin	September 1941 (1)	September 1942 (in thousands) (2)	June 1943 (in thousands) (3)
1.	Belgium	121,501	225	400
2.	Bulgaria	14,578	15	15
3.	Denmark	28,895	30	35
4.	France	48,567	100	550
5.	Italy	271,667	300	300
6.	Yugoslavia	108,791	132	182
7.	Netherlands	92,995	200	250
8.	Poland	1,007,561	1,308	1,548
9.	Slovakia	80,037	210	220
10.	Bohemia-Moravia	140,052		
11.	Hungary	34,990	35	30
12.	Finland	--189,919	-	3
13.	Rumania		13	15
14.	Baltic States		-	10
15.	Greece		26	5
16.	Norway		-	4
17.	Spain		7	7
18.	Sweden		1	1
19.	French Africa		-	3
20.	Soviet Union		898	1,422
	TOTAL	2,139,553	3,500	5,000

2. Mobilization of Internal Reserves. The German government has during the past year undertaken to mobilize the remaining reserves of internal labor power for essential war work. A decree of January 27, 1943 required the registration of all female residents of Germany aged 17 to 45 and males aged 16 to 65 who were not full-time gainfully employed. Registrants were to be examined for availability for employment and, if available, directed to essential war work.

A second decree on February 4, 1943 ordered the closing down by March 15 of all non-essential enterprises.

It is believed that the effect of these decrees has been relatively unimportant. It is unlikely that the number of women in employment can have been increased by more than 100,000 as a result of the registration. [The employment rates of German women were already extremely high in 1942, and it is unlikely that many more women could be transferred from the German domestic economy.]

Nor is it likely that the closing of non-essential concerns will lead to any important transfer of labor to more essential employment. These enterprises had been losing personnel for some years, and the number of employees remaining must have been small. Furthermore,

the transfer value of the remaining personnel is undoubtedly very low. Perhaps 200,000 to 300,000 sub-standard workers may have been transferred under the closing decree. These do not represent an addition to the labor force, of course, as they were already counted as gainfully active.

3. Productivity of the New Recruits. The new workers recruited during the past year are probably considerably below the German average in productivity. In the case of the internal recruits, many are part-time workers or old and unfit persons. The foreign workers in general will not work with enthusiasm. It is impossible to estimate exactly the productivity trend, but it seems unlikely that the inherent productivity of the German labor force has fallen by as much as 5 percent since 1939 on account of the recruitment of less capable workers.[1/] This decline would probably be less than the compensating gain due to technological advance in the same period.

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1/ For the basis of this estimate, see Appendix B.

APPENDIX A

CURRENT RATE OF GERMAN PERMANENT LOSSES

Data from obituaries are not yet available for estimating German permanent losses in July and August, but it is possible to estimate them with some confidence by comparing descriptive information on recent operations with descriptive information on earlier periods covered by estimates based on obituary data.

The average of German permanent battle losses, not counting prisoners of war, from July 1941 to December 1942, is estimated at about 130,000 per month. The range of values is from about 80,000 in December 1941 to 225,000 in December 1942.

The monthly distribution of losses does not support the idea that the Germans have been able to avoid losses by planned withdrawals. In January, February, and March 1942, the Germans were withdrawing slowly and in fairly good order on the front between Lake Ilmen and Mozhaisk, and there were no major operations reported in the communiques of either side from other fronts. Yet German losses averaged 136,000 per month in this period.

German losses in July, August, and September 1942 averaged 141,000 per month. During this period

the Germans attacked on the southern front south of Voronezh; they took the Donetz and Rostov, and the fighting moved into the Don bend and the Kuban. For two of the three months, there were few reports of heavy fighting except in the Don bend and before Stalingrad, and to a much lesser extent in the North Caucasus.

A comparison of Soviet and German communiques of July-September 1942 with those of July-September 1943 leaves little doubt that fighting has been much heavier and more extensive this year. This year's communiques from both sides mention heavy fighting on a front from Smolensk to the Sea of Azov, and also on the Taman peninsula, a front perhaps 600 miles in length, while last year (aside from some mention of the Rzhev front) there was little mention of other sectors than those from Voronezh to the Sea of Azov. The 1942 front was about half the length of the 1943 front.

The German communiques this summer repeatedly refer to heavy fighting at various places along the entire front from Smolensk to the Sea of Azov. They described the fighting in the first half of July 1943 as "the greatest mechanized battle in history." They repeatedly refer to Soviet attacks launched with "strong forces" and often refer to heavy artillery

support and numerous tanks employed. The communiques refer frequently to "temporary breaches in our lines" which are always subsequently restored.

The detailed comment in the recent German communiques suggests that the Germans are harder pressed on a longer front than ever before in the present war.

It is true that the loss of important towns such as Orel and Kharkov has regularly been accompanied by statements to the effect that the evacuation was according to a general plan. If such were the case losses might be expected to be light. The Bryansk episode however exposed the unreliability of German statements on this point; the Germans announced the evacuation according to plan, and embroidered the story with details claiming that they had evacuated every man and every cartridge and had destroyed all military installations. The Soviets did not claim Bryansk, and after three days of elaboration on the model evacuation of the town, the Germans changed their story and claimed that Bryansk was still in their hands, as it undoubtedly was. The model evacuation of Bryansk was a fake, and the brilliantly executed evacuations of Orel, Taganrog, and other fortresses probably involved much the same principle.

It is therefore believed that German losses

APPENDIX B

ESTIMATE OF THE DECLINE IN PRODUCTIVITY OF THE GERMAN CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE

In making an estimate of the effect of this shift in the composition of the labor force on its productive capacity, an attempt was made tc determine how effectively each of the various broad groups can be expected to serve as replacements for men drawn into the army. On the basis of wage data it is estimated that women are 80 per cent as effective as men and prisoners of war 60 per cent "effective" in replacing men. French experience after the last war suggests that disabled veterans may be considered 65 per cent "effective." From an analysis of the uses to which Germany is putting foreign workers it is estimated that this group is 90 per cent "effective." Internal recruits, chiefly overage and part-time workers are estimated to be 80 per cent "effective." The above estimates indicate a decline of 5 to 6 per cent in the productive capacity of the German labor force due to changes in its internal composition.

over the summer of 1943 have been considerably heavier than those of 1942. The German and Soviet communiques alike indicate a much heavier scale of operations; the estimate of 175,000 permanent battle losses per month is probably conservative.